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MORAL LEARNING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL: AN OVERVIEW

ASHOK KUMAR AND SHABIR AHMED

Research Scholars, Department of Educational Studies, Central University of Jammu

ABSTRACT

Moral education is usually conceptualized on the assumption that youth needs foremost moral values and orientation, and, therefore, most methods of moral education focus on the teaching of moral values and orientations. In contrast, great moral educators like Socrates and Lawrence Kohlberg, as well as modern moral psychologists, argue that we can already build upon the moral ideals of students, and, instead, have to foster moral-democratic competence, i.e., the ability of moral judgment and the ability of moral discourse. Today's modern era is era of globalization. Inclination of our youth toward western life style and culture is natural. This inclination is not only limited to youth, almost everybody in country is running a blind race of cut throat competition to accumulate more money and things of leisure and pleasure. In recent years increase in percentage of crimes committed by youth especially adolescents has created a line of concern on the face of parents. Root cause of the problem lies in the quality of education we are providing to our child. Parents are putting more emphasis on materialistic education based on educational achievements of child, neglecting the overall development of child. Not only parents but teachers and schools are also responsible for misdirecting the direction of education. Even our curriculum and syllabus is also not favourable for teaching moral values to child. But now parents and teachers both have recognized the importance of value education in life of an individual. In early childhood before going to school, it is responsibility of parents to incorporate essential human values in child. Once he or she is admitted to school it is expected that parents and teachers will jointly carry out their duty to teach him values for making him better man or woman who can stand tall in life even in worst situations.

Key Words: Moral Education, Value crisis, Child Rearing Practices, Imitation, Society and Media.

INTRODUCTION

Concerted review of literature has revealed that Moral education is becoming an increasingly popular topic in the fields of psychology and education. Before we talk about the nature of moral education we must

clarify its goals and tasks and ask what it can and what it cannot achieve. Teaching methods are not values in themselves but only one value in relation to the learning and teaching goals at issue. A problem frequently encountered in moral education is that although its goals mostly take the knowledge gained from moral psychology into account, the methods used are often ineffective or even run counter to these goals. It can happen that an attempt is made to teach morality in a way which contradicts the declared goals. If, for example, human rights are taught as if their validity depends solely on the weight of state authority, this approach fails to recognize that these rights are individual and not the rights of the state or its institutions, including the schools. Moral education in a democracy must, therefore, start from the bottom, from the individual. Moral educators must be willing and able to promote the responsibility and autonomy of the individual by using these fundamental moral principles themselves in the teaching of their students, just as a mathematics teacher must be able to solve the tasks he presents to his students or a sports teacher to demonstrate the exercises he wishes his students to perform.

MORAL EDUCATION

Morality is a system of conduct and ethics that is virtuous. Morality has three principal meanings. (a) In its descriptive sense, "Morality" refers to personal or cultural values, codes of conduct or social mores that distinguish between right and wrong in the human society. (b) In its normative sense, morality refers directly to what is right and wrong, regardless of what people think. It could be defined as a conduct of the ideal "moral" person in a certain situation. The normative usage of the term morality is also addressed by normative ethics. (c) Morality may also be defined as a synonymous with ethics, the field that encompasses the above two meanings and other within a systematic philosophical study of moral domain. Ethics seeks to address questions such as how moral outcomes can be achieved in a specific situation (applied ethics), how moral values should be determined (normative ethics), what morals people actually abide by (descriptive ethics), what the fundamental nature of ethics or morality is including whether it has any objective justification (meta ethics, agency develops and what its nature is (moral psychology).

Morality is viewed as the "system of rules that regulate the social interactions and social relationships of individuals within societies and is based on concepts of welfare (harm), trust, justice (comparative treatment and distribution) and rights" (Smetana 1999). This is how humans determine their actions based on their cognitive abilities to interpret a social situation. Issues of reasoning, problem solving skills, self-control and adaptability are components in exhibiting key components of the moral process. For some individuals, issues of values, personal

feelings and social norms are constructs for discussion and therefore can be seen as being influenced by the way in which morality is taught or experienced in schools, churches and other social institution settings.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHILD'S MORAL EDUCATION?

Although, socialization theorists have viewed moral internalization as stemming primarily from parents' influence on their children through their parenting practices, structural-developmental theorists generally have proposed that hierarchical nature of parent-child relationships constraint children's moral development. This has led to the predominant focus on the formative role of peers and social institutions such as schools in moral reasoning development and a relative neglect of the role of the family (Smetana 2004). Talking about who is responsible for the moral education of the child, Pakarsky (1998) "The Role of Culture in Moral Development in Journal of Parenthood in America) recognized the role of culture above other variables in the moral education of the child. He opines that a dogmatic conviction that schools are adequate to the challenge of making moral sensibilities and disposition into the child is inappropriate. Tigay, H.Z. quoted in Smetana (2004) on the other hand in addition to the roles of schools and parents in the moral development of the child has also emphasized the role of religious institutions. Tigay in fact is of the opinion that the religious bodies have a major part to play in the moral education of the child than any of the other agents. With these divergent views as expressed by authors, an attempt is made from hence, to begin to look at the roles of each of these agents in the moral development of the child.

VALUE CRISIS:

In present era of science and technologies where we are inclined more toward knowledge and ranks in examinations rather than applying the learning in our day today life and utilizing the knowledge for development of society, nation and ourselves in true sense. Basic purpose of education – to enlighten the inner soul of an individual enabling him in understanding the life in better way has lagged behind in the race of modernization. In near future if we failed to incorporate the essential value based Education in our children, the whole meaning of Education will be lost in this materialistic world.

Value crisis in the society implies the erosion of the traditional values of society. As we know that education prepares the learners to lead a good life. But in present days education's primary aim is to the transmission of knowledge and cultivation of occupational skill. Education is becoming more materialistic and the values are gradually goes down. Most the people run after money, power comforts without carrying for any value. Moral

education is being deliberately neglected in our educational system. Our country is passing through the period of value crisis. Our social life is full of corruption violence, exploitation, disparities, and disruption. There are various causes of value crisis as:

1. Modernization
2. Westernization
3. Materialism
4. Other causes (Crimes, corruption, delinquency, murdered, alcoholism, drugs, terrorism, money, power, exploitation etc).

Attitudes and values which are learned at young age often change at the adolescents meets people having different attitudes and values. Change may occur but the foundation laid earlier, generally present. It indicates that the most important learning in the cultivation of morality is what is learnt in the home and in the social group? The school also plays an important role, and also helps in inculcating moral values among the children. But the major role has to be played by the family and society because the children spend maximum time here. The following practices are helpful for inculcating moral values outside the school among children.

1. CHILD REARING PRACTICE: The proper up-bringing of the child plays a significant role in developing moral values in the child. Improper up-bringing of the child may leads to the growth of antisocial tendencies in him, because of the social maladjustment. Child rearing practice includes:

- **Sympathy:** Sympathy plays an important role in developing the moral values in the child. He begins to love with those persons who behave with him sympathically.
- **Co-operation:** In a family where everyone works with co-operation, the atmosphere is conducive for developing good moral values in the children.
- **Suggestion:** Time to time suggestions by parents, family members and elders helps to determine the social behaviour of the child also develops good qualities in the children.
- **Identification:** Sympathy, love and suggestions of parents, relations and well wishes develop in child the feelings of identification with others. He begins to behave according to their ideals, language and standard of living.

- **Games and sports:** Parents should encourage their child to participate in games and sports also. While playing games, various social qualities, sympathy, fellow-feeling, co-operation and team spirit etc values are develops in the children.
 - **Interaction with community and society:** Parents should encourage their children to attend various social functions and community programs like melas, marriages and other religious functions. These functions develop in them the moral values and other social qualities.
 - **Incentives:** Rewards and punishment have great influence in developing moral values in the children. If the child behaves according to the ideals and beliefs of the society, and shows good moral values he/she should be rewarded. But if shows immoral behaviour he/she should be punished.
2. **MORAL LEARNING BY IMITATION:** Mother is the first informal teacher of the child followed by father, relatives, friends and peer groups and other members of the family. So, mother plays an important role in developing moral values among children. When the child grows older, he imitates and learns number of qualities like love, sympathy, tolerance, respect for elders and co-operation from the mother. After mother, other family members also play a vital role in developing moral values among children. If one of the members of the family is unmoral or unethical, the child may imitate him/her and follow the same path. It is the responsibility of the parents to look after their children's activities outside the home also.
3. **NATURE OF THE SOCIETY:** Society also plays the major role in developing the moral qualities and values among children. If a child lives in a well educated, democratic, economically sound and well adjusted society, the social and moral values are developed and leads to the proper personality development of the child. On the other hand if the child lives in the bad society i.e. corrupted, unemployed, poor/broken society, and the society in which bad activities like smoking, drinking, stealing and cheating etc always happened is responsible for developing unmoral character in the children. Thus, society can also contribute a lot for developing moral values in the child.
4. **MEDIA:** Media can also contribute a lot in developing the moral values in the children. Children can imitate the heroes and heroines of the movie and the character of the serials. If the dresses of the character or the heroes/heroines, themes of the movie or character are of good moral value, the child will also try to copy them or imitate them. But, if the movies or characters are not morally sound then it has also seen that the children behave in the same way. It is important that movies and serials that are shown on TV or radio or in cinema should be full of moral values. Other Medias like news paper and magazines play important role in

developing moral education in the children. the news papers should cover the articles on great leaders, religious heads people who is morally sound and high moral character. In the same way the magazines too should have stories and articles on great people/personalities.

SUGGESTIONS

Here are some suggestions, which can be helpful in development of essential moral values in children if implemented with serious efforts and outmost care:

- Up-bringing of the child plays a significant role in developing moral values in the child. Parents should try to invest more time with the child rather than investing their time in earning money. It is the responsibility of the parents to look after their children's activities in the home and outside the home also.
- Mother, Father and other family members should be morally sound because the young child imitates them at every walk of their life. Children acquire the qualities like love, sympathy, tolerance, respect for elders and co-operation from the mother, father and elder members of the family, so all the family members should be morally sound.
- Society also plays the major role in developing the moral qualities and values among children. Society should set social and moral norms, beliefs and principles before the people. And immoral persons should be punished by the society. Society should organized cultural activities like dramas, skits, melas and other such activities on moral themes.
- Parents, teachers and other eminent members of society should try to inculcate important moral values in child by demonstrating not through teaching it formally in classrooms. Society should also celebrate the birthdays of great personalities and other national and international days or events, in order to inculcate the moral values in the youth.
- Media plays an important role in inculcating moral values in child. Especially television channels should try to avoid showing serials, programmes, advertisement which directly or indirectly challenges the human values. Same responsibility is expected from other form of media such as news paper, magazines etc.

CONCLUSIONS

Someone has said that the role of moral education in schools is to reinforce values gained at home. Each child from birth, by virtue of his environment, belongs to a significant group. Family members, friends, relatives, teachers and administrators play a major role in the formation of the character of each child. One of the purposes

of moral education is to help, make children virtuous—honest, responsible, and compassionate. From above discussion we can come to conclusion that providing moral or value based education to our children from infancy stage especially during adolescence age group can help us in overcoming the problem of deteriorating moral values in our youth. Parents and teachers have to rethink that which type of education they want their future generation to learn. Collaborative efforts of parents, teachers, society and media can bring the Indian youth on right track to live a disciplined life.

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